Teaching Committee

COORDINATING GROUP FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2006.

Present: Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Mrs L Booth (LLL), Dr T Boswood (EFL Unit), Dr M Ferguson (LFA), Ms S Hodges (ILIAD), Dr E Loughlin (GTU) Mr M Nicolaides (SU), Ms H Richardson (York Award), Ms C Whiskin (Library)

In attendance: Dr J James (Administrative Officer, Secretary)

Apologies: Dr S Grace (YCAP)

06/01 Welcome

The Group welcomed Mr Michael Nicolaides of the SU, Dr Eleanor Loughlin of the Graduate Training Unit (GTU) and Ms Catherine Whiskin of the Subject Services Section of the Library.

06/02 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2005.

06/03 Library Grant

Secretary's note: subsequent to the meeting, the Manager of the Centre for Lifelong Learning confirmed that she would meet with Elizabeth Heaps, the University Librarian, to discuss the issue of access to library resources for the Centre's accredited students. This was an issue which the Centre's Board of Studies was actively pursuing.

06/04 Language Support for Overseas Students
Further to M05/19, it was reported that the EFL Unit was now offering free in-sessional English-language support for students who were non-native speakers of English. Ms Fran Collins had been appointed to the post of International Coordinator and was charged with maintaining an oversight of support for overseas students. It was hoped that both measures would help to significantly improve the experience of overseas students at York.

06/05 Schedule of Teaching Committee Visits

Further to M05/20, it was noted that the Teaching Committee reviews of the EFL Unit and YCAP had taken place in the Autumn Term of 2005. The review of YCAP had served as a preparation for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) accreditation visit in November. The HEA visit had been a success, with the YCAP programme being re-accredited for five years with no conditions.

06/06 Hourly Paid Tutors

Further to M05/26, it was noted that a Director of Human Resources had been appointed and would be in post from April 2006. The new Director would be asked to ensure that the University's treatment of hourly paid tutors was in line with best practice.

ACTION: TAS

The Director of LFA reported that LFA tutors, who had formerly been employed on an hourly-paid basis, had now been transferred, with the help of the Personnel Office, on small percentage contracts on Grade 1 of the OR scale. The individuals concerned now received a standard University contract and were treated as full employees of the University, with proper access to car parking, staff training, pensions etc. This approach was better employment practice and was supported by the AUT. It was necessary to have a rough idea about the amount of time that each member of staff would
work before the contracts were drawn up, but the contracts could be varied (at a cost of administrative time) to accommodate changes in the number of hours worked.

++06/07 Terms of Reference and Membership

The Group received a revised membership and terms of reference. It was noted that the revision reflected the fact that the Group was now primarily a forum for discussion and the sharing of good practice, whilst responsibility for quality assurance lay with the relevant Boards of Studies. In the case of ILIAD and the York Award, which did not have a Board of Studies, new programmes and modifications etc. should continue to be sent directly to the Academic Support Office for consideration by the Chair of Teaching Committee.

The Committee recommended to Teaching Committee its revised membership and terms of reference: included as Appendix I.

++06/08 Student Study Skills

The Group considered the University’s approach to study skills (agendum 5). This item had been prompted by the decision of the Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching to commission a study of current practice within the University in relation this area.

In the course of discussion, the following points were noted:

- it was important to distinguish between study skills (for academic purposes) and student skills (transferable skills for employment and life in general e.g. as developed by the York Award, volunteering etc.), although there would necessarily be some overlap
- there had, in the past, been a lack of clarity about which body within the University was responsible for study skills. It had, however, recently been agreed that
University responsibility for study skills would lie with Teaching Committee

- there was a growing need for study skills due to changes in school education and the University's commitment to widening participation
- the University's existing study skills provision was not a model of good practice: action was needed to develop a consistent, coherent and coordinated approach to study skills
- it was important to make use of the pockets of expertise and good practice within the University, for example the EFL Unit and mature students workshop programme
- although study skills should be readily available to all students within the University, it should be recognised that particular groups (e.g. overseas/mature/postgraduate students) had particular needs
- there was a need to consider the most appropriate balance between more generic centrally delivered study skills and provision being embedded within the curriculum and delivered via departments
- there was a need to consider how study skills would link to personnel development planning.

The Group suggested that Teaching Committee should set up a working party to take forward the work on study skills initiated by FELT. The Group recommended that this working party should include the International Coordinator, Mrs Linda Terry from the Department of Health Sciences and representatives from: the GTU, Library, ILIAD, EFL Unit, Centre for LLL, Widening Participation Office, Student Support Office, Counseling Service, SU, GSA, Mature Students Association and Overseas Students Association. It was further recommended that the working party should, as a priority, hold focus groups with students.

06/09 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Unit
The Group received an oral report from the Director of the EFL Unit.

It was noted that:

- the Unit was now offering free in-sessional English-language support, using a points-system, for students who were non-native speakers of English
- predictions for the uptake of the free in-sessional courses had been reasonably accurate and the Unit was on target to deliver 600 student places
- once the uptake of the free in-sessional courses could be estimated with some accuracy, it was hoped that some tutors could be employed on a more permanent basis
- the Unit was keen to increase the number of courses tailored for students in particular departments
- the Unit was moving towards British Council EiBAS accreditation
- there had been a successful visit from Teaching Committee and the Unit was following up resulting actions. One consequence of the visit had been the clarification that the Board of Studies of the Department of Educational Studies was responsible for the quality assurance of the Unit’s programmes.

It was decided that the Director of the EFL Unit should liaise with the Department of Economics to discuss the ongoing provision of language training for postgraduates, postdoctoral fellows and lecturers within the Department for whom English is a second language.

**ACTION: TB**

06/10 ILIAD

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the ILIAD programmes.

It was noted that:
the centrally-run ILIAD for University programme was now free to all students and, possibly as a consequence, the numbers enrolling on the programme had risen slightly this year, reversing a previous downward trend

a VLE training package for students had been developed and piloted. As a consequence of the pilot, the materials had been adapted to place a greater emphasis on online (rather than workbook-led) learning.

06/11 Centre for Lifelong Learning (LLL)

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the Centre for LLL.

It was noted that the Centre:

- was to be reviewed in order to decide its location (for administrative purposes) within the University
- had been granted ‘in principle’ approval by Teaching Committee for its part-time BA in Humanities. A number of issues needed to be resolved prior to the programme's commencement
- was giving serious consideration to moving all of its evening classes to Alcuin in order to form a Lifelong Learning hub and improve the quality of its teaching accommodation
- was developing vacation courses for 8-13 year old children. A pilot would be based at the Minster School but the Centre hoped to gain lottery funding to run courses at schools with a wider socioeconomic intake. The Centre hoped to recruit volunteers from the York Students in Schools project and from the PGCE programme
- had had difficulties in dealing with the York Conference Park and Accommodation Office over finding suitable and affordable teaching space and accommodation.

ACTION: LB to consult with TB and submit a paper to TAS giving details of the difficulties experienced with the York
Conference Park and Accommodation Office, and suggesting possible solutions

06/12 Languages for All (LFA)

The Group received an oral report from the Director of LFA.

It was noted that:

- four new staff had been appointed to manage the French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese teaching teams
- tutors had been placed on proper contracts, which had boosted morale significantly
- course fees had been raised to cover increased costs, but this had not affected recruitment
- LFA had taken over the applied language teaching for the Department of Language and Linguistic Science. As part of this process, a new member of staff was improving the management of the French provision, particularly in relation to the year abroad. Similar work would be undertaken for the German provision, once a new appointee was in post
- a proposal had been put to UTC to allow LFA courses to be taken as electives for credit
- LFA and the EFL Unit would be moving to a new building, as the Language Teaching Centre was being demolished.

This issue of ongoing problems with the heating in certain rooms in the Physics Building (P/T005 and P/T007 in particular) in the evening, would be drawn to the attention of the Director of Facilities Management.

**ACTION: JJ**

06/13 York Award

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the York Award.
It was noted that:

- the York Award had not been permitted to include a flyer within the information packs for new students: it was not yet known whether this would impact upon the number of students undertaking the Award. The Award was, however, publicised in many other ways, including via departmental inductions, supervisors and the web and the number registering continued to rise.
- the number of students completing the Award continued to increase. If this trend continued, the Award team would need to consider the mode of assessment as, although it was much appreciated by students, it was very labour intensive and relied upon the goodwill of a large number of internal and external individuals.
- the Award team was continuing to develop new courses for Award participants.

06/14 Graduate Training Unit (GTU)

The Group received an oral report from the GTU representative. It was noted that the GTU's remit was to provide training and professional development opportunities for the University's postgraduate research students and research staff. The GTU was funded by money from the research councils.

It was reported that:

- the GTU had been able increase the number and range of courses on offer this year.
- the enrollment on GTU programmes had increased significantly.
- new initiatives included: 'bite size' courses, 'Charity Stretch' (experiential learning of event organisation), a VLE-based time-management programme and a 'mini YCAP' for postgraduates who teach.

06/15 Subject Services Section of the Library
The Group received an oral report from the representative of the Subject Services Section of the Library and Archives. It was noted that the Subject Services Section was responsible for working with departments, and other bodies within the University, to deliver information literacy skills to students.

It was reported that the Subject Services Section was:

- following up actions arising from the recent Teaching Committee visit. In particular, the Section was developing generic learning outcomes for information literacy
- considering how the VLE could be used to deliver training in information literacy and, in particular, how the VLE might be used to train hard-to-reach students e.g. distance learning students, part-time students etc.
- working with departments and students to follow up the results of the National Student Survey.

06/16 Students' Union

The Group received an oral report from the representative of the Students' Union. It was noted that the SU Executive was being streamlined, and as part of this process, the SU sabbatical posts were being reorganised.

06/17 Computer Systems

It was noted that LFA and the Centre for LLL were already using the SITS system for student records. Any difficulties with SITS could be taken up with Mr Mike Calvert, Business Services Development Manager.

It was also noted that there was enthusiasm for the University's adoption of the e-pay system, which would allow students and external customers to pay on-line. Those interested in pursuing this option should speak to Mrs Kay Mills-Hicks in the Computing Service.

06/18 Next Meeting
It was noted that the next meeting would take place in the summer of 2006.

ACTION: JJ

 Appendix I

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Teaching Committee

COORDINATING GROUP FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES

Membership and Terms of Reference

Membership

- The Chair of Teaching Committee, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning (Chair)

The Directors/Managers of the Supplementary Programme Areas:

- Manager, Centre for Lifelong Learning
- Director, EFL Unit
- Manager, ILIAD
- Director, LFA
- Manager, York Award
- Director, YCAP
- Representative, GTU
- Representative, Subject Services Section of the Library and Archives

Student Representation

- 1 undergraduate representative (nominated by the Students' Union)
• 1 postgraduate representative (nominated by the Graduate Students’ Association)
• 1 mature student representative (co-opted)

Terms of Reference

1. To act as a forum for the supplementary programme areas, facilitating the exchange of information and discussion of issues of common interest and concern
2. To promote effective quality assurance practices within the supplementary programme areas, in particular through the sharing of good practice
3. To consider the practical needs of the supplementary programme areas (e.g. in relation to teaching accommodation, staffing etc.), referring matters, where appropriate, to committees and offices within the University
4. To consider matters referred to it by bodies within the University and to report to Teaching Committee
5. To promote equality of opportunity across the areas represented.

(Agendas and minutes: Academic Support Office)